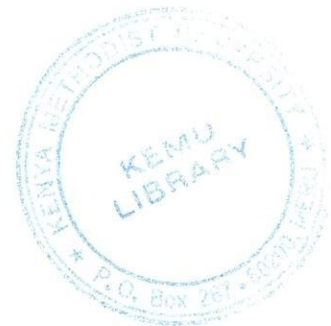


**DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVENESS OF STUDENT LEADERS IN THEIR
ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES. A CASE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PREFECTS IN
NYERI SOUTH SUB COUNTY**

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ABSTRACT

Calls for inclusions of student leaders in the decision-making structures and administration in schools have led to various attempts by the Ministry of Education to put in place structures for inclusion such as the prefect body and the student council. The effectiveness of the prefects in their roles is however debatable since the cases of student unrest continue to be recorded in schools. The purpose of the study was to examine the determinants of effectiveness of secondary school prefects in their administrative roles. The study sought to examine the criterion for appointing prefects, explore the programmes used by schools to prepare and induct prefects to perform leadership roles, to establish the extent of involvement of prefects in the governance of the schools and to examine the challenges facing prefects in their administrative duties. The study adopted descriptive research design and targeted 34 deputy principals, 680 teachers, 990 prefects and 4760 students in the 34 schools in Nyeri South Sub County. It used a sample comprising of 4 deputy principals, 88 teachers, 90 prefects and 98 students. Questionnaires and structured interview schedules were used to collect data. A pilot study involving 10% of the sample size was conducted in order to enhance the reliability and validity of research instruments. The data from the questionnaires and interviews was analyzed with aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v.20) software using percentages and averages. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in analyzing the data. The study found out that the level of effectiveness of the prefects was perceived as average by both students and the teachers. On the criteria of appointing prefects it was found that good conduct is considered most when appointing prefects and that the administration played the largest role in the appointment of prefects. The criteria of appointing prefects were found to be student centered but undemocratic. It was also found out that all the schools use a form of strategy to induct the prefects with a majority of the schools using seminars and workshops. However both prefects and the teachers perceived the induction programmes used to be inadequate to prepare prefects to effectively discharge their duties. The respondents expressed the need of involvement of the prefects in the decision making process in the schools. However, majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the extent of involvement of prefects in decision making is low. Challenges originating from the individual incompetence of prefects included lack of adequate leadership skills, lack of self motivation, indecisiveness and poor communication skills. Challenges emanating from the prefect system included lack of appreciation from the administration, lack of proper role clarity, time management issues, lack of exposure on practice of student leadership, abuse of powers and privileges, lack of involvement in decision making and lack of support from the administration. Challenges originating from the student body included lack of cooperation, rebuke, ridicule, intimidation and bullying from the other students. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the process of appointing prefects be made more participatory whereby all the stakeholders of the school should be involved. Secondly, qualities required for effective leadership such as leadership qualities, conduct and accountability should be emphasized when appointing prefects. Thirdly, prefects should be involved more in decision making on the issues concerning the welfare of the students. Further, they should be included in the key decision making organs of the school such as BOM and PTA. Once the recommendations are implemented, most challenges faced by the prefects will be alleviated and the level of effectiveness of the prefects will be enhanced. The study findings have highlighted the factors that can enhance the effectiveness of the prefect system in public secondary schools.